

# Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis, or pink eye, is inflammation of your conjunctiva. The conjunctiva is a thin tissue that covers the front of your eye and the back of your eyelids. The conjunctiva helps protect your eye and keep it moist. Conjunctivitis may be caused by bacteria, allergies, or a virus. If your conjunctivitis is caused by bacteria, it may get better on its own in about 7 days. Viral conjunctivitis can last up to 3 weeks.

## Return to the emergency department if:

- You have worsening eye pain.
- The swelling in your eye gets worse, even after treatment.
- Your vision suddenly becomes worse or you cannot see at all.

## Manage your symptoms:

- Apply a cool compress. Wet a washcloth with cold water and place it on your eye. This will help decrease itching and irritation.
- Do not wear contact lenses. They can irritate your eye. Throw away the pair you are using and ask when you can wear them again. Use a new pair of lenses when your healthcare provider says it is okay.
- You can use over-the-counter lubricating eye drops
- Do NOT use drops like “VISINE” to make your look less red.

## Medicines:

Treatment depends on what is causing your conjunctivitis. You may be given any of the following:

- Allergy medicine helps decrease itchy, red, swollen eyes caused by allergies. It may be given as a pill, eye drops, or nasal spray.
- Antibiotics may be needed if your conjunctivitis is caused by bacteria. This medicine may be given as a pill, eye drops, or eye ointment.
- Take your medicine as directed. Contact your healthcare provider if you think your medicine is not helping or if you have side effects.

## Prevent the spread of conjunctivitis:

- Conjunctivitis can be VERY contagious and spread quickly (and from one eye to the other).
- Wash your hands with soap and water often. Wash your hands before and after you touch your eyes. Also wash your hands before you prepare or eat food and after you use the bathroom or change a diaper.

- Avoid allergens. Try to avoid the things that cause your allergies, such as pets, dust, or grass.
- Avoid contact with others. Do not share towels or washcloths. Try to stay away from others as much as possible. Ask when you can return to work or school.
- Throw away eye makeup. The bacteria that caused your conjunctivitis can stay in eye makeup. Throw away mascara and other eye makeup.

<https://www.drugs.com/cg/conjunctivitis-aftercare-instructions.html>